

## **CLAIM LISTING**

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**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

1. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

(b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, ~~from a plurality of manufacturing entities,~~ which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

(c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

(d) ~~through prior arrangements with said plurality of manufacturing entities,~~ determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of ~~generally increasing prices~~ for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account ~~a general increase~~ a change in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a ~~decreasing discount changing in price~~ to encourage and reward early timely commercial commitments ~~and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;~~

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to ~~make conditional offers of~~ said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, ~~with said conditional offers specifying, at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;~~ and

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(f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(g) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 2. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein  
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation  
of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 3. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 4. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 2,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which  
may be accessed through the Internet.

- 5 5. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers  
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.
- 10 6. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 1  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.
- 15 7. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
personal use.
- 20 8. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:
- (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said  
articles of manufacture for resale; and
- 25 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.
- 30 9. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1,  
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of  
article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities  
available, and a delivery date.

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10. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 1, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

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- (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- 15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

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11. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

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- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- 25 (4) a processed commodity.

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12. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 13. (Amended once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a  
10 general ~~an~~ increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

15 14. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 1, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 15. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

25 16. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 14, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

5 17. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized  
in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 18. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16,  
wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to  
potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make  
decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

15 19. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 16,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided  
to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from  
potential manufacturers.

5 20. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

~~(d) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;~~

20 ~~(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to negotiate a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;~~

25 ~~(f) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;~~

~~(d) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;~~

30 ~~(g) (e)~~ for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;



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~~(h)(f) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of generally increasing different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a general an increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a generally decreasing discountchange in price to encourage and reward early timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing entities;~~

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~~(i)(g) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and~~

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~~(j)(h) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture;~~

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~~(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.~~

5 21. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 22. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 23. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

25 24. (Amended Once) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 25. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 26. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 27. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

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(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

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(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

20 28. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

5 29. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 20,  
wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of  
(a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a  
plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;  
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;  
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;  
15 G1 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;  
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and  
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 30. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,  
wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;  
(2) a non-perishable article;  
(3) a processed, perishable article;  
25 (4) a processed commodity.

30 31. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,  
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which  
are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at  
a plurality of consumption locations.

5 32. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (f) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones  
to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said  
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a  
general increase in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced,  
ai wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally  
decreasing discount in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

15 33. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 20,  
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to  
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of  
cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 34. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33,  
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,  
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning  
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

25 35. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 33,  
wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits,  
receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in  
proposed articles of  
manufacture.

30 36. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in  
making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 37. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35,  
wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential  
manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said  
proposed articles of manufacture.

10 38. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 35,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to  
potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential  
manufacturers.

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5 39. (Amended once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing an virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity, ~~but which is otherwise a relatively disintermediated commercial interaction;~~

15 (c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a  
20 plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

(d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

25 (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture, in the form of a conditional offer each of which is binding upon said plurality of manufacturers if an aggregate minimum number of orders is obtained in a predetermined amount of time ;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through said virtual exchange;

5 39. (Amended once) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing an virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity, ~~but which is otherwise a relatively disintermediated commercial interaction;~~

15 (c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a  
20 plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

(d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

25 *Hyphic copy* (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture, in the form of a conditional offer each of which is binding upon said plurality of manufacturers if an aggregate minimum number of orders is obtained in a predetermined amount of time;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through said virtual exchange;



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(g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

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(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of ~~generally increasing changing~~ prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account ~~a general a change~~ increase in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a ~~generally decreasing discount in changing~~ price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward early commercial commitments ~~and to reduce commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers;~~

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(i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

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(j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones ~~in order to meet said aggregate minimum number of orders for~~ and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; ~~and~~

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~~(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply~~

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(g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

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(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward early commercial commitments and to reduce commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers;

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(i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price;

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(j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones in order to meet said aggregate minimum number of orders for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply

5 chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

Q10 (k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

5 chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

(k) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 40. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 41. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- a /
- (1) a local area network;
  - (2) a wide area network;
  - (3) a cable system;
  - 15 (4) an internet communication system; and
  - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 42. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

25 43. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 44. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 40. (Original) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 41. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- 15 (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 42. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

25 43. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 44. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 45. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 46. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

15 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

20 47. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

5 45. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 46. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

15 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

20 47. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

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5 48. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;  
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;  
9, (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;  
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;  
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;  
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and  
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 49. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;  
(2) a non-perishable article;  
25 (3) a processed, perishable article;  
(4) a processed commodity.

30 50. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 48. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 39, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;  
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;  
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;  
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;  
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and  
(8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 49. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;  
(2) a non-perishable article;  
25 (3) a processed, perishable article;  
(4) a processed commodity.

50. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are  
30 located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 51. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones  
to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said  
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a  
general increase in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said  
selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are  
experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding  
15 incrementally decreasing discount in price to said plurality of potential purchasers to  
encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

20 52. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,  
wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a  
marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which  
comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

25 53. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,  
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,  
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning  
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

30 54. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,  
wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand  
research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality  
of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

5 51. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones  
to establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said  
plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a  
15 general increase in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said  
selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are  
experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding  
incrementally decreasing discount in price to said plurality of potential purchasers to  
encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

20 52. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 39,  
wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a  
marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which  
comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

25 53. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,  
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,  
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning  
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

30 54. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 52,  
wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand  
research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality  
of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

5 55. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized by said plurality of manufacturers in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

9 10 56. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

- 5 55. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized by said plurality of manufacturers in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.
- 10 56. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 54, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

5 57. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

Q/ 15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying at least one pricing milestone in each of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond to an increase in commercial risk;

20 (d) determining a separate price for each pricing milestone to establish an increasing price for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments relative to a production cycle for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

25 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said pricing milestones with said separate price;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

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(g) wherein each pricing milestone corresponds to a period of availability in which costs of future supply chain activities or savings related to avoidance of future supply chain activities are reflected in an offer price.

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5 58. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein  
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation  
of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 59. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 58,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

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- (1) a local area network;
  - (2) a wide area network;
  - (3) a cable system;
  - (4) an internet communication system; and
  - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 60. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 58,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which  
may be accessed through the Internet.

25 61. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers  
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture.

30 62. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 57,  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

5 63. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

10 64. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

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15 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

20 65. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a delivery date.

5 66. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 57, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 10 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;  
(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;  
(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;  
15 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;  
(7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and  
Al (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

20 67. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;  
(2) a non-perishable article;  
25 (3) a processed, perishable article;  
(4) a processed commodity.

30 68. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

5 69. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

10 (d) determining a separate price for each of said pricing milestones to  
establish a series of increasing, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality  
of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account an increase in  
said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of  
increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally decreasing discount  
in price to encourage and reward early commercial commitments.

15 70. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 57,  
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to  
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of  
cascading graphical user interfaces.

20 71. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 70,  
wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting,  
receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning  
proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

25 72. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 70,  
wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits,  
receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in  
proposed articles of manufacture.

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5 73. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized  
in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 74. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,  
wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to  
potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make  
decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

15 75. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 72,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided  
to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from  
potential manufacturers.

5 76. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing an virtual exchange which allows for a relatively direct, aggregated, and moderated series of commercial interactions between a plurality of manufacturers of articles of manufacture and a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture, which is under control of said trusted intermediary entity;

15 (c) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is utilized to enable said virtual exchange and which is available to said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture for offering for sale through said virtual exchange said plurality of articles of manufacture and to a plurality of potential purchasers of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

20 (d) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

25 (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to obtain production guarantees from said plurality of manufacturers of said plurality of articles of manufacture, in the form of a conditional offer which obligates each of said plurality of manufacturers to produce and sell a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture at a plurality of predetermined production lot cycle milestone prices provided that an aggregate minimum number of orders is received through said virtual exchange in advance of occurrence of each particular production lot cycle milestone;

30 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to identify a

5 plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers through said virtual exchange;

(g) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of production lot cycle milestone prices in at least one  
10 of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond generally to an increase in commercial risk;

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15 (h) through prior arrangements between said trusted intermediary entity and said plurality of manufacturers, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of production lot cycle milestone prices to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk experienced by said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said production lot cycle milestone milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to said plurality of  
20 potential purchasers to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to minimize commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers;

(i) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of  
25 potential purchasers at each of said plurality of production lot cycle milestone prices with said separate price; and

(j) utilizing said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said particular ones of said plurality  
30 of potential purchasers for each of said production lot cycle milestone prices and thereby exceed said aggregated minimum number of orders for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture and triggering said conditional offer .

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77. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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78. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

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79. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

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80. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 76 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

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81. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.



5 82. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76 wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

(1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

10 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use.

15 83. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, and a projected delivery date.

20 84. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 76, wherein said pricing milestones include certain natural milestones in at least one of (a) said manufacturing stage and (b) said distribution stage, including at least a plurality of pricing milestones selected from the following list of pricing milestones:

- 25 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- 30 (6) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (8) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

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85. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

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- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- (4) a processed commodity.

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86. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

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87. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

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(h) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a general change in said commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of increasing, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally changing price to said plurality of potential purchasers to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

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5 88. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 76, wherein said electronic communication system of said virtual exchange utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 89. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 88, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

15 90. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 88, wherein said marketing interface of said virtual exchange includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

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5 91. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising.

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

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15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost, or opportunity:

- 20 (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;  
(2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;  
(3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;  
(5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;  
(6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;  
25 (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;  
(8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and  
(9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture;

30 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing in price to encourage

5 and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

10 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

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15 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

20 (g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery  
25 area.

5 92. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91, wherein  
said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation  
of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 93. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 92,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

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- (1) a local area network;
  - (2) a wide area network;
  - (3) a cable system;
  - (4) an internet communication system; and
  - 15 (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 94. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 92,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which  
may be accessed through the Internet.

25 95. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers  
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are  
organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery  
area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed  
costs.

5 96. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and  
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related  
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or  
10 delivery components of landed costs.

15 97. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
personal use.

a1 98. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91  
further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

20 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

25 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to  
make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part  
through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost  
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

5 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

99. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of  
10 article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

100. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery  
15 from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

20 101. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

25 102. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

(d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of  
30 articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally



5 103. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 91, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 104. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 93, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

15 105. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 104, further comprising:

(h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture; and

20 (i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.

25 106. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 104, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 107. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 105, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

10 108. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 105, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

15 109 (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 103, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically.

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5 110. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

(d) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in at least one of the following respects:

20 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area;

25 (2) said potential purchasers are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture; and

30 (3) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

(e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(f) utilizing said trusted intermediary to arrange a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

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(g) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;

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(h) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain milestones, which correspond to a change in commercial risk, cost or opportunity

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- (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
- (8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
- (9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture.

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(i) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing

5 entities;

(j) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

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Q1 (k) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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5 111. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110, wherein said electronic communication system allows controlled and password protected access to said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 112. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

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- (1) a local area network;
  - (2) a wide area network;
  - (3) a cable system;
  - (4) an internet communication system; and
  - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 113. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

5 114. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that  
are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture and as satisfying one of  
the following additional conditions:

10 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic  
delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture  
economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of  
scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic  
15 delivery area;

ar (2) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically  
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to  
minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

20 115. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 110  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

25 116. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
personal use.

5 117. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,  
further comprising:

(l) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

15 (m) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order  
to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in  
part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost  
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (n) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically  
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the  
freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 118. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 110,  
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted  
intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at  
least a product specification, quantities available, projected delivery date, and  
region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

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5 119. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110, wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- 10 (4) a processed commodity.

120. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at  
15 a plurality of consumption locations, and wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

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20 121. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

- (i) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account  
25 changes in said commercial risk, cost, opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of different, discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally changes in price to encourage and reward time commercial commitments.

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5 122. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 110, wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 123. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

15 124. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 123, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

20 125. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 124, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 126. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 125, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 127. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 126,  
a1 wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to  
potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential  
manufacturers.

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5 128. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

20 91 (1) a design stage for an article of manufacture;

(2) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(4) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

(5) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;

25 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing price to encourage and  
30 reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said

5 selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of  
potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate  
price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles  
which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding  
upon a manufacturing entity;

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(f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with  
particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial  
commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing  
milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of  
manufacture; and

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(g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small  
geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of  
manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies  
of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery  
area.

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129. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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130. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

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131. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 129, wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may be accessed through the Internet.

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132. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

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5 133. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and  
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related  
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or  
10 delivery components of landed costs.

Q 1 134. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
15 personal use.

5 135. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128 further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

11 (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

15 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 136. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 128, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

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5 137. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,  
wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery  
from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential  
purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational  
10 constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight  
haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

138. (New). A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,  
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or  
consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from  
15 said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption  
locations.

ai 139. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

20 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to  
establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of  
articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said  
commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced,  
wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally  
25 changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

140. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 128,  
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to  
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of  
30 cascading graphical user interfaces.

5 141. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 140, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

10 142. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 140, further comprising:

(h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers  
15 in proposed articles of manufacture; and

(i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.

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20 143. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 142, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 144. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 143, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

5 145. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 144,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided  
to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from  
potential manufacturers.

10 146. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 143,  
wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to  
determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a  
sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles  
of manufacture economically.

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5 147. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing a trusted intermediary entity;

10 (b) providing at least one data processing system which is under the control of said trusted intermediary entity and which includes an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

15 (c) utilizing said trusted intermediary entity to qualify said plurality of potential purchasers for participation in commercial transactions utilizing said electronic communication system;

a' (d) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in at least one of the following respects:

20 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area;

25 (2) said potential purchasers are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture; and

(3) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

30 (e) utilizing said trusted intermediary to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture from a plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(f) utilizing said trusted intermediary to arrange a conditional offer from each of said plurality of manufacturing entities for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture;

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(g) wherein each conditional offer specifies at least one price for each of said plurality of articles of manufacture and a minimum number which must be ordered before said conditional offer becomes binding;

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(h) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain milestones, which correspond to a change in commercial risk, cost or opportunity

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- (1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
- (3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
- (4) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
- (5) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;

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(i) determining a separate aggregate minimum order number and price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk for said plurality of manufacturing entities;

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(j) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at

5 each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price; and

(k) utilizing said electronic communication system to offer said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale in the form of a conditional offer and to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers in order to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers and to meet said separate aggregate minimum order number for each of said pricing milestones and thereby making said conditional offer binding upon a particular manufacturing entity of a particular one of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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5 148. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system allows controlled and password  
protected access to said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 149. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- 15
- (1) a local area network;
  - (2) a wide area network;
  - (3) a cable system;
  - (4) an internet communication system; and
  - (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

20 150. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which may  
be accessed through the Internet.

5 151. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers that  
are pre-qualified by said trusted intermediary entity as being financially responsible to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture and as satisfying one of  
the following additional conditions:

10 (1) said potential purchasers are located in a sufficiently small geographic  
delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture  
economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of  
scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic  
15 delivery area;

a1 (2) said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically  
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to  
minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

20 152. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 147  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale.

25 153. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
personal use.



5 154. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
further comprising:

(l) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

al (2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

15 (m) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order  
to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in  
part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost  
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (n) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically  
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the  
freight or delivery component of landed costs.

25 155. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system is utilized by said trusted  
intermediary entity to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at  
least a product specification, quantities available, projected delivery date, and  
region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

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5 156. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,  
wherein said articles of manufacture comprise at least one of:

- (1) a durable article;
- (2) a non-perishable article;
- (3) a processed, perishable article;
- 10 (4) a processed commodity.

157. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,  
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites which  
are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at  
a plurality of consumption locations, and wherein said articles of manufacture are  
15 manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation  
sites which are located remotely from said plurality of potential purchasers which  
are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

20 158. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

- (i) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones  
to establish a series of different, discrete prices for said selected ones of said  
25 plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account  
changes in said commercial risk, cost, opportunity as said pricing milestones  
are experienced, wherein said series of different, discrete prices provide a  
corresponding incrementally changes in price to encourage and reward time  
commercial commitments.

30 159. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 147,  
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to

5 identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of cascading graphical user interfaces.

10 160. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

a 15 161. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture.

20 162. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 159, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 163. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 162, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

- 5 164. (Original) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 162,  
a wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided to  
potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential  
manufacturers.

5 165. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 a1 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

(1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

20 (2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

(d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

30 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate

5 price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

10 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture; and

Al 15 (g) wherein said potential purchasers shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area.

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5 166. (New) A method selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,  
wherein said electronic communication system allows simultaneous and mass  
presentation of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

10 167. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

15 *Al* 168. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,  
wherein said electronic communication system comprises an Internet site which  
may be accessed through the Internet.

20 169. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165,  
wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers  
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are  
25 organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery  
area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed  
costs.

5 170. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 165  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and  
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related  
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or  
10 delivery components of landed costs.

171. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165  
wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
15 personal use.

al 172. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165  
further comprising:

(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

- 20 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and  
(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small  
quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

25 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to  
make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part  
through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost  
inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

30 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically  
related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the  
freight or delivery component of landed costs.



5 173. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 165, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

10 174. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165, wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight  
15 haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

ca 175. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165, wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from  
20 said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption locations.

176. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim 165, wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:

25 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a correspondingly  
30 changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

5 177. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost or opportunity:

20 (1) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;

(2) a production stage for an article of manufacture;

(3) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;

25 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing discount in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

30 (e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate

5 price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

10 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture.

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178  
5 179. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177,  
1726 wherein said electronic communication system comprises at least one of:

- (1) a local area network;
- (2) a wide area network;
- (3) a cable system;
- 10 (4) an internet communication system; and
- (5) a hybrid television and internet communication system.

179  
15 180. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177,  
176 wherein said electronic communication system is available to potential purchasers  
that are pre-qualified as being financially responsible to the extent necessary to  
fulfill a commitment to purchase said articles of manufacture, and which are  
organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery  
area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed  
costs.  
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180  
25 181. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacturer according to claim 177,  
176 wherein said potential purchasers comprise resellers of said articles of manufacture  
which purchase large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale, and  
wherein said resellers are either organizationally related or geographically related  
such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize freight or  
delivery components of landed costs.

181  
30 182. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177,  
176 wherein said potential purchasers comprise individual consumers of said articles of  
manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for  
personal use.

5 <sup>182</sup>  
~~183.~~ (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim <sup>176</sup>~~177~~  
further comprising:

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(h) wherein said potential purchasers comprise a mixture of:

10 (1) resellers of said articles of manufacture which purchase sufficiently large quantities of said articles of manufacture for resale; and

(2) individual consumers of said articles of manufacture which purchase small quantities of said articles of manufacture for personal use; and

15 (i) wherein said resellers are in a sufficiently small geographic delivery area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in freight and/or delivery cost inside said sufficiently small geographic delivery area; and

20 (j) wherein said potential purchasers are organizationally related or geographically related such that said geographic delivery area is sufficiently small to minimize the freight or delivery component of landed costs.

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<sup>183</sup>  
184. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim 177, wherein said electronic communication system is utilized to identify said plurality of article of manufacture by providing at least a product specification, quantities  
30 available, delivery date, and region or destination for delivery and/or delivery route.

5 <sup>184</sup> 185. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>176</sup>~~177~~,  
wherein said potential purchasers are pre-qualified such that the cost of delivery  
from a production or consolidation location is known in advance and said potential  
purchaser group size is coordinated to meet logistical, cost, and operational  
constraints which may be imposed by third-party service providers such as freight  
10 haulers, freight forwarders, and ocean carriers.

<sup>185</sup> 186. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>176</sup>~~177~~,  
wherein said articles of manufacture are manufactured at production sites or  
consolidated for shipment at consolidation sites which are located remotely from  
15 said plurality of potential purchasers which are located at a plurality of consumption  
locations.

<sup>186</sup> 187. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>176</sup>~~177~~,  
wherein said step of determining a separate price comprises:  
20 (d) determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to  
establish a series of different discrete prices for said selected ones of said plurality of  
articles of manufacture, with each discrete price taking into account a change in said  
commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced,  
wherein said series of different discrete prices provide a corresponding incrementally  
25 changing price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments.

<sup>187</sup> 188. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>176</sup>~~177~~,  
wherein said electronic communication system utilizes a marketing interface to  
identify said plurality of articles of manufacture which comprises a plurality of  
30 cascading graphical user interfaces.

5 <sup>188</sup> 189. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>187</sup> 188, wherein said marketing interface includes an affinity reward system for soliciting, receiving and rewarding input from said plurality of potential purchasers concerning proposed articles of manufacture, and for aggregating said input.

10 <sup>189</sup> 190. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>187</sup> 188, further comprising:

15 (h) wherein said marketing interface includes a demand research model which solicits, receives, and aggregates interest from said plurality of potential purchasers in proposed articles of manufacture; and

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*Q1*  
(i) wherein said marketing interface includes a listing of potential product features, and a means for registering preference for one or a combination of features at a given price.

20 <sup>190</sup> 191. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>189</sup> 190, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

25 <sup>191</sup> 192. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>189</sup> 190, wherein said aggregated input from said potential purchasers is provided to potential manufacturers in order to assist them in making make/don't make decisions for said proposed articles of manufacture.

30 <sup>192</sup> 193. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, according to claim <sup>191</sup> 192, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is provided

5 to potential manufacturers in-part in return for a production guarantee from potential manufacturers.

<sup>193</sup>  
194. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture according to claim <sup>189</sup>190, wherein said aggregated input from said plurality of potential purchasers is utilized to determine the economic viability of direct container sales of a given item in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically.

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194  
5 195. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

(a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

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15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of the following supply chain phases, which correspond to changes in commercial risk, cost, or opportunity:

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- (1) a product idea stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (2) a design stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (3) a pre-production stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (4) a production stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (5) a packaging stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (6) a packing-for-shipment stage for an article of manufacture;
  - 25 (7) a shipping stage for an article of manufacture;
  - (8) a warehousing stage for an article of manufacture; and
  - (9) an in-stock stage for an article of manufacture;

30 (d) through prior arrangement with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of different prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk, cost or opportunity as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing in price to encourage

5 and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said plurality of manufacturing entities;

(e) utilizing said electronic communication system to make conditional offers of said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture for sale to said plurality of  
10 potential purchasers at each of said plurality of pricing milestones with said separate price, with said conditional offers specifying at least a minimum number of articles which must be ordered in aggregate before the conditional offer becomes binding upon a manufacturing entity;

15 (f) utilizing said electronic communication system to separately communicate with particular ones of said plurality of potential purchasers and to aggregate commercial commitments from said plurality of potential purchasers for each of said pricing milestones and thereby selling said selected ones of said plurality of articles of  
a manufacture; and

20 (g) wherein said plurality of manufacturing entities shall be qualified in a sufficiently small geographic area in order to make pricing of said plurality of articles of manufacture economically attractive in part through realizing the benefit of economies of scale in consolidation, packaging and container loading inside said sufficiently small  
25 geographic area.

195  
5 196. (New) A method of selling articles of manufacture, comprising:

A12 (a) providing an electronic communication system which is available to a plurality of potential purchasers of said articles of manufacture;

10 (b) utilizing said electronic communication system to identify a plurality of articles of manufacture, from a plurality of manufacturing entities, which are available for purchase by said plurality of potential purchasers;

a1 15 (c) for selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture which are available for purchase, identifying a plurality of pricing milestones in at least one of (1) a manufacturing phase and (2) a distribution phase, which correspond to an increase in commercial risk; and

20 (d) through prior arrangements with said plurality of manufacturing entities, determining a separate price for each of said plurality of pricing milestones to establish a range of changing prices for said selected ones of said plurality of articles of manufacture, taking into account a change in said commercial risk as said pricing milestones are experienced, and providing a changing in price to encourage and reward timely commercial commitments and to reduce the commercial risk to said  
25 plurality of manufacturing entities.